

Eschequer throw an certain amount of discouragement—to use a popular phrase, “three cold water”—upon the plan, and led the Board of Health to fear that they should not be able to carry it out; and it was intimated that another measure would be brought forward, more in accordance with the views of those who had always opposed this great sanitary measure. His opinion was, that it could never be effectually dealt with except by the Government, and that a board not acting with the authority of the Government, and responsible to the Government, could never carry into effect the complicated and delicate measures necessary. He hoped he should be excused if he mentioned a rumour which was abroad, that it was the intention of the Government to constitute a new board for carrying into effect the object of extramural interment, such board to have also the control of the sewerage and water supply of the metropolis. Surely these were matters which ought to be kept distinct and separate from one another. It was difficult to conceive anything more calculated to offend the people—he had been going to say to disgust them—to wound some of their best feelings, than placing under one body the interment of the dead and the sweeping of the streets and cleansing the sewers, to say nothing of the subject of water supply. He hoped the rumour was not true, and that the interment of the dead—probably in itself nearly, if not quite sufficient to occupy the whole attention of a board—would be placed under men who would deal with it with the seriousness and consideration which its importance required. For himself, he must say, too, he should be grieved to see the conduct of it taken out of the hands of gentlemen so highly qualified to manage it as the members of the Board of Health.

Mr. Godwin, F.R.S., followed with some observations upon the extreme importance of discontinuing the burial of the dead in the midst of the living, and the impossibility of preventing the escape of the deleterious gases thus generated. It was not to be supposed that because we had not had cholera the graveyards were not doing their work; low fever and typhus fever were for the most part preventible, and a serious responsibility rested upon those who by exertion had the power very much to prevent them and did not do so. It could not be necessary now, when scientific men had proved the evils,—when the Legislature had said by Act of Parliament, “it is expedient to make better provision for the interment of the dead,”—to point out the crying want; and yet here we were fifteen months after the passing of the Act and positively nothing real had been done. The speaker alluded to the surprise expressed out of doors that Government should be willing to allow money to be borrowed from assurance companies at five per cent. when they could obtain it for half by eschequer bills; and discussed briefly the plan proposed by the Board of Health.

Mr. C. J. P. Lord, Mr. Walsh, and others having made some brief observations,

Lord John Russell said, that the difficulties which had occurred were very much difficulties of detail; and questions of this kind, where all might agree upon the principle, depended very much upon the details. The Board of Health had gone into great detail, and it was said their scheme was a very good one. But he found that, when they tried to follow it out, so as to make it practically work, they could come to no other conclusion than that the body intrusted with interment should entirely take it upon itself. Government had a great deal to do, and undertaking to be answerable for the removal and burial of every dead body in a population of 2,000,000, was really a serious matter. With regard to the cemeteries, he believed those which they had engaged to buy, in order to meet my great calamity or pestilence that might befall us, were calculated to inter about 6,000 in a year; it was stated that the whole mortality of London amounted to 50,000 or 60,000, and, therefore, they would evidently not supply the means of burial for the whole, and it would be necessary to go much farther, and buy all the cemeteries. It was asked, why was not something immediately done? He would say the Government had not the power to do it. The Board of Health had supposed they should be able to procure money immediately to purchase the whole of the cemeteries: they found themselves mistaken in that, and that it could only be done by applying to the credit of the Government. No power had been given to the Government to do this.

two cemeteries, and it would require an Act of Parliament to enable more to be procured. He would now ask Sir C. Wood to state the way in which the question stood at present.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer observed, that in the beginning of the year, he believed, the Board of Health sent in a proposal to the Treasury, whose consent was necessary, to buy all the existing cemeteries, and an estimate which seemed to be very small. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) made some inquiries through the Woods and Forests, and satisfied himself that the sum required would be three or four times as much as this estimate. It was, however, stated substantially that no good could be done unless the whole were bought. Then came the question how the money was to be provided. The whole matter having gone upon the principle that the Government was not to advance a penny—there being no power in the Act to do so—the question was how the board could borrow.

They said they could borrow from assurance companies. They had proceeded all along with the full knowledge that the Act contained no power for the Government to make advances, that that was not the principle of the Act, and that they were not to have Eschequer bills, but to get the money from other sources. Well, why could they not borrow? Because they had no power of insuring the payment of a fee; and they came to this conclusion—“Unless we have the management of all the burials in London, and within fifty miles round it, with a power of charging a fee upon every death, whether the corpse is buried by us or not, we cannot borrow money.” Now, that was a very serious power. It was near the end of the session, and he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) thought it was a power which it was not reasonable, at the end of July or beginning of August, to ask Parliament to give. Unless they had that, the board said they were not sure of a sufficient income to enable them to borrow the money. However, power was applied for to warrant an advance of money to buy two cemeteries, for which the board had engaged in negotiation; and either or both might be taken. He might remark that in Edinburgh no one was buried within the city, but the whole was managed by cemetery companies; therefore it did not seem so absolutely impossible to be done by private parties.

In reply to Mr. Godwin, who asked how long the question was to remain in this unsettled state, and whether or not the deputation might give assurance to the public that the Government saw the importance of carrying out the measure.

Lord John Russell said that the matter must remain till next session; that they felt the importance of the object; but that the manner of carrying it into effect was a matter for consideration.

The inference we are compelled to draw is, that the Government do not intend to enable the Board of Health to carry out the present Act. It certainly seems strange for a Government to say, fifteen months after passing an Act to settle how a desired object shall be carried out, that the mode of doing this has yet to be considered. We shall not be much astonished, however grieved, if the whole fight has to be fought again.

THE PROPOSED ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBITION AND COLLECTION OF INVENTIONS.

As a well-wisher to the efforts now making to establish the Architectural Exhibition on a lasting basis, permit me, through the medium of your widely-circulated journal, to draw earnest attention to these endeavours. The committee may make all exertion, and their officers may spare no pains or trouble, but the whole will be comparatively in vain, if the profession linger in apathetic indifference, careless as to the result, and unmindful of their own advantage.

While it has always been acknowledged that an exhibition of this kind is calculated to improve and extend public taste in this branch of art, and so to benefit its professors and raise them in public estimation, the cause suffered some injury from the erroneous impression that to support this Exhibition was necessary hostility to the Royal Academy. That idea is now happily exploded; the fact is, that if all the architectural works done in each year were brought before the public, they would fill all the galleries in Trafalgar-square, and it would be preposterous to suppose that the finding the necessary accommodation elsewhere can be objected to, much less be made an excuse for doing up the fine art altogether,

whenever the nation may provide a fitting place of reception for all.

I am glad to observe, by the published circulars, that the committee are not looking for elaborate pictures; that clear intelligible drawings are all that are wanted; and how easy would it be if, when a set of designs were made, one fair view was executed with a little increase of care, and set aside “for the next Exhibition.” There would be no extra labour or expense; and if I may judge from the amount of building carried on in this great country, we might fill the Portland Galleries three times over. Again, I hope we shall see a goodly number of competition drawings. A competition never occurs but we hear complaints of unfair usage: here there is an open court in which the proofs may be brought forward; let them be hung in sets: let us have all the designs for the numerous competitions during the past year, and let the public and the profession judge the right and the wrong: without doubt, if this be followed out, it will be a most important auxiliary to the competition committee.

The committee have conferred a great boon on all by endeavouring to unite a museum of inventions and all other things connected with building matters to the exhibition: how inventors and others will respond to this important appeal remains to be seen. We have always wanted some place where such things could be collected together for deliberate inspection: a detailed description should be inserted in the catalogues, and they would be preserved for future reference. Will the committee admit lithographs? I think they should, if printed privately only and not published: they might easily be kept by themselves and would assuredly be of public interest: they are but drawings on stone instead of paper and ought not to be shut out. I have heard it is also contemplated to have a table set apart for architectural works, so that many which are little known would be immediately brought into public notice, and their sale no doubt increased.

I trust, Sir, you will keep attention alive to this important subject: let us all do what we can—as well country as London architects,—and those who cannot help in the exhibition may at least send their guinea or half-guinea subscription, for expenses in first establishing anything of this kind are always heavy. But let us, above all, make the exhibition of public interest, and in a year or two it will support itself. A SUBSCRIBER.

THAMES BRIDGES.

If we are to have a new bridge at Westminster, is it not of the greatest importance that both those disgraceful erections, Putney and Battersea bridges, should be cleared away as soon as possible, and others substituted? One is doomed; but since the volume of water, and its direction, will be affected by their removal, whenever it may take place, it appears to me very desirable that there should be a united effort to get rid of them altogether, and at once.

That the bridges in question are a great hindrance to the free navigation of the river all will allow, and no one feels it more than myself. Were they removed, I should not hesitate to fit vessels to bring direct to my wharf heavy building materials such as slates, Portland and Caen stone, &c. &c., instead of having to unload below bridge, and lighter them up.

The poor river stands very little chance of competing with the rail unless every improvement that can be effected is promoted by the Thames authorities, and other interested parties. You will see that it is a question of vital importance to the owners and occupiers of wharves within reach of the tideway; for, clear away the bridges in question, and we can have up, direct, coals and every other description of heavy goods.

But the great question now is—what will be the effect upon the foundations of the present bridges, and those to be erected, by the removal of those at Battersea and Putney? B. K.